26, 2003 the release of 60 Pakistani civilian prisoners and 70 fishermen as soon as Pakistan indicates its readiness to accept them and the established procedures are completed by the Government of Pakistan. Following this, 6 Pakistani civilian prisoners were released on 25.6.2003.

(b) Pakistan released 20 Indian prisoners and India released 6 Pakistani prisoners last time.

(c) As per available information, 863 Indian civil prisoners, 319 fishermen and 54 missing Indian defence personnel are believed to be in custody in Pakistan.

(d) Government has consistently taken up the case of early release and repatriation of Indian prisoners in Pakistan through diplomatic channels. Prisoners are released after completion of their jail sentences and verification of their national status.

Discussion of Foreign Secretary Regarding Troops to Iraq

491. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India's Foreign Secretary during his recent visit to Washington met the U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defence and the Deputy Secretary of State to discuss the American request of sending Indian troops as part of stabilisation force in Iraq;

(b) whether he pointed out to them various grey areas in the proposal including those in the UN Resolution on the subject; if so, the details of the Indian concerns discussed and grey areas pointed out to them; and

(c) the U.S. response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) Yes.

(b) Foreign Secretary conveyed our assessment of the provisions of the UNSC resolution 1483. He sought clarifications on a number of issues, including the security situation in Iraq, development of a responsible Iraqi Interim Administration, future political evolution in Iraq and humanitarian and relief activities. Operational issues such as

command and control of Indian forces, their role and mandate, and the relationship with the UN were also discussed.

(c) The U.S. officials offered clarifications on some of the political and operational issues raised by Foreign Secretary. They provided their assessment of the situation in Iraq as well as the U.S. interpretation of the UNSC Resolution 1483.

Assurance by U.S. President to prevent infiltration

492. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:
DR. AKHILESH DAS:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether during the recent visit of the Prime Minister to Petersburg, the U.S. President assured him to impress upon President of Pakistan to take effective steps to prevent infiltration by militants into J&K; and

(b) if so, what is Government's information regarding the steps taken to carry out the assurances in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) Yes.

(b) The United States maintains that it continues to press Pakistan for an end to cross-border infiltration. President Bush said at the joint press briefing with President Musharraf after their Camp David meeting on 24 June 2003; "we discussed the need to address extremism and cross-border infiltration, and I assured the President that the United States will do all we can to promote peace". A senior U.S. official stated in his briefing. "I think the president put it about as well as anybody can, which is what we expect and what we think Musharraf needs to commit to and we think he has committed to is a hundred percent effort at trying to stop cross-border incidents."

Talks with China

493. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what new relations have been established with China through the Prime Minister's visit to that country;